

LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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Lowell High School
Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, November 1, 2018
Central Administration Building
TV Studio - 5th Floor
6:30 p.m.

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Dominik Lay, Andy Descoteaux and Jackie Doherty.
School Committee Members Present:	Robert Hoey
School Department Personnel Present:	Fred McOsker, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services Marianne Busteed, Head of Lowell High School Michael Ortiz, Counsel for Student Support Services Roxane Howe, Discipline & Operations Specialist Deidre Haley, B House Dean David Slattery, E House Dean Jill Rothchild, Director, Freshman Academy Robert Delossa, Social Studies Department Chair

The Subcommittee update is in response to the following motion:

Motion by School Committee Member Robert Hoey, which was approved at the October 3, 2018, School Committee Meeting:

"Administration to set up meeting with the Lowell High School Subcommittee for the purpose of discussing discipline and the Latin Lyceum.

Chairperson Dominik Lay called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. and asked Mr. Hoey if he would like to speak about his motion. Mr. Hoey stated that he has talked with many middle school principals and they have really expressed a need for a Dean of Discipline in all of the middle schools and he would really like to hear from the Lowell High School House Deans to hear their thoughts on this issue and to tell us what they think Lowell High School needs. Marianne Busteed, Head of Lowell High School then addressed the Subcommittee. Ms. Busteed presented a PowerPoint presentation that included discipline and attendance data and information regarding Lowell High School's focus this school year. She spoke about a new program called Best Buddies that match students with disabilities with other students that become their buddies. She spoke about student race and ethnicity and selected populations as well as enrollment, grades served and student/teacher ratio. She stated that on the first day of school they had grade level assemblies and they reviewed important school policies. Ms. Busteed then shared a snippet of a video that the House Deans showed the students on the first day of school which streamed through all the TV's in the high school. She also stated that any time there is a major event all the House Deans as well as the Head of School meet together when meeting with families for consistency purposes.

Mr. Hoey stated that he appreciated the presentation and said that school suspensions went down and that the district was criticized for suspending too many students in the past so he was pleased. Mr. Hoey stated that he would like to see any student who is violent or has a weapon be suspended for 90 days.

Dean Slattery responded that over the years the high school looks at discipline differently and that students have legal rights and students and their parents need to have due process and that guides the high school with the length of a suspension. As an example, he stated that if a student has an IEP that student can only be suspended for 45 days. The high school is looking at suspension differently and students have more needs and need more supports. We look at each student differently and many factors play into our decisions when disciplining students.

Mr. Descoteaux added that there are many laws on the books that dictate how long you can suspend a student.

Mr. Ortiz stated that what Dean Slattery said is correct and that the district is governed by Chapter 222 and it gives discretion to the Principals and the House Deans and encourages the district not to look at zero tolerance and to work on what the right decision is for the student. The district needs to make sure the discipline is appropriate and needs to make sure that students can be successful when they return. The district is governed by the law and due process.

Mr. Hoey stated that recently we've had guns in our schools and is concerned that a student can bring a gun and then fire it after school and receives no discipline. He asked if a student is a repeat offender can we challenge it in court.

Mr. Ortiz stated that if a student is a repeat offender that the district can move the student to another school or we can appeal it or we can expel, but even expelling a student isn't what it appears, because we still have to provide an educational plan.

Mr. Descoteaux stated that he has heard that there is a spike in in-school fighting and has heard this from several staff members at Lowell High School and they're frightened and wants to know if this is being dealt with.

Ms. Busted stated that after the situation that happened in downtown in September it was happening, but the high school is dealing with it and it has been getting better.

Dean Haley stated that there is a decrease this month and a lot of the issues that the high school is dealing with are neighborhood issues and it involves whole families and that the high school needed the help of the police department and the police are currently involved. She also spoke about the large increase in mental health concerns and how it is impacting the high school greatly due to the decrease in mental health services in the city and the state.

Mr. McOsker added that he completely agrees and shares the same concerns around mental health issues.

Mr. Lay asked if Mr. McOsker felt there are mental health issues in the elementary schools as well.

Mr. McOsker stated that mental health issues have increased throughout the district and resources have shrunk.

Mr. Hoey stated that he thinks Lowell High School should have a Dean of Discipline.

Ms. Busted agreed and stated that the high school needs help and more support services would be beneficial.

Ms. Busted then spoke about the Latin Lyceum program and provided a profile of the program. There is also a form called the LHS Latin Lyceum Profile that is sent to the College Admission Officers when a student in the program is applying to that college.

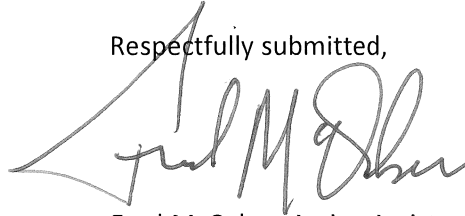
Mr. DeLossa stated that no other students have the requirements that the students have in the Latin Lyceum.

Mr. Descoteaux stated that Latin Lyceum is the best thing we have in the entire district and he hears a lot of parents wondering why it's such a high level of education and why there isn't a different category for them.

Mr. DeLossa stated that we would have to be a different program and we don't have the staff and the only way we could change the weight would be a separate school. When the students graduate they get a diploma that has the designation that it is a greater elevation. He also stated that the Carney medalists are almost always dominated by Latin Lyceum students if not predominately.

Ms. Descoteaux made a motion to adjourn at 7:59 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 3 yeas
APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fred McOsker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "F".

Fred McOsker, Acting Assistant
Superintendent for Student Support
Services for Jeannine M. Durkin, Acting
Superintendent and Acting Secretary,
Lowell School Committee

FJM/mes